



U.S. Congressman Brad Carson Second District of Oklahoma

Guide to Federal Assistance Programs: FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant 2003



March 2003

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has announced a third round of funding through the Assistance to Firefighter Grant Program. This program has been extremely beneficial to fire departments across eastern Oklahoma, and I expect many departments in my Congressional District to receiving funding again this year. The Assistance to Firefighter Grant Program is highly competitive, however, by working together, I am confident my office will be able to secure funding for many departments as in the previous two rounds.

I have compiled this guide to assist your department in applying for this program, and to ensure applications from Oklahoma's Second Congressional District are among the most competitive in the nation. I want to work with your fire department as much as I can. In 2002, I wrote over 50 support letters for fire departments, and I am more than willing to do anything I can to assist fire departments again this year.

If you should have any questions, need any assistance, or wish to obtain a letter of support, please do not hesitate to contact Shane Jernigan in my Washington, D.C. office at (202) 225-2701.

I recognize the importance volunteer and rural fire departments have in eastern Oklahoma. I have been a strong advocate for increased funding for this program, and will continue to lend my support for programs designed to benefit fire departments.

Very truly yours,

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Brad Carson
Member of Congress

FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program 2003

Essential Program Information

Program Objective

To provide direct assistance, on a competitive basis, to fire departments of a State or tribal nation for the purpose of protecting the health and safety of the public and firefighting personnel against fire and fire-related hazards.

Deadline

The deadline for submitting an application is April 11, 2003.

Award Amount

The average award amount for the program from 2001 and 2002 was \$51,000. The maximum award amount is \$750,000.

Matching Requirement

Departments serving a community of 50,000 or less in population must provide 10% of the total project cost.

Application

As in 2002, the FEMA Fire Grant will be an online application. Each department may submit one application.

FEMA Website

The application for the program, as well as additional information, can be found on-line at www.usfa.fema.gov.

Previously Awarded Departments

Departments previously funded in 2001 or 2002 can apply for funding in 2003.

Funding Availability

Congress has appropriated \$750,000,000 for the Assistance to Firefighter Grant program through September 2004.

Funding Categories

Fire Operations and Firefighter Safety
Fire Prevention Programs
Emergency Medical Services Program
Vehicle Acquisition Program

FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program 2003 Contact Information

Congressman Brad Carson

Requests for assistance, letters of support, or any additional information should be addressed to:

Shane Jernigan
Office of Congressman Brad Carson
Washington, D.C. Office
Phone (202) 225-2701
Fax: (202) 225-3038
E-mail: Shane.Jernigan@mail.house.gov

FEMA

Phone: (866) 274-0960
Fax: (866) 274-0942
Website: www.usfa.fema.gov
E-mail: usfagrants@fema.gov

Letters of Support

Congressman Brad Carson is more than willing to write a letter of support for any fire department in his Congressional District applying for this grant. To request a letter of support, please fax your application to (202) 225-3038, e-mail your application to Shane.Jernigan@mail.house.gov, or mail a copy of your application to:

Congressman Brad Carson
Attention: Shane Jernigan
403 West First Street, Suite 100
Claremore, Oklahoma 74017

Please do not mail your application for a letter of support to the Washington, D.C. office. Due to precautions taken to prevent additional anthrax mailings, mail to Washington, D.C. can take over a month to arrive.

FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program 2003 Evaluation Process

First Step

Each application will be scored based on answers to questions about project. Applications which best meet the priorities of the grant program will receive a higher score. All applications will be reviewed in step one.

Second Step

Applications deemed competitive from step one, will move to step two. Firefighter peer reviewers will read the application's narrative description. Applications that best address the need for federal assistance through a cost/benefit analysis and demonstrate a financial need will be awarded.

Program Options

Departments can apply for only **ONE** program; however, a department may apply for more than one activity under each program.

Fire Operations and Firefighter Safety Program

Eligible Activities: Training
 Wellness and Fitness
 Firefighting Equipment
 Personal Protective Equipment
 Modifications of Fire Facilities

Fire Prevention Programs

Eligible Activities: Public Education
 Public Awareness
 Code Enforcement
 Arson Prevention

Emergency Medical Services Program

Eligible Activities: Equipment
 Training
 Wellness and Fitness

Vehicle Acquisition Program

Funding Allocations

FEMA will distribute \$750,000,000 through September 2004.

45% of the funding will be provided to career departments

55% of the funding will be provided to volunteer and career/volunteer departments

FEMA must balance funding between rural, urban, and suburban departments.

2002 Awards

Fire Operations and Safety:	11,502 applications
41% success rate	4,739 awards

Prevention Program:	496 applications
44% success rate	216 awards

EMS Program:	398 applications
14% success rate	54 awards

Vehicles:	7,140 applications
4% success rate	316 awards

The Vehicle Acquisition program is by far the most competitive; only 4% of the applications were funded in 2002. Departments are strongly encouraged to apply for Fire Operations and Safety or the Prevention Program.

Fire Operations and Firefighter Safety Program

Training Activity

Examples of projects:

- Firefighting Training
- Wildland Fire Training
- Hazardous Material Response
- Supervision and Safety

Priorities Placed on:

- Direct Delivery of Training
- High Percentage of Personal Receiving Training
- Train the Trainer
- Rural Departments should focus attention to basic training

Wellness and Fitness Activity

Priorities Placed on:

- The establishment of new programs
- Programs that are mandatory or offer participation incentives
- Fitness, injury prevention, and mental health programs

Applications for this program must already offer or be requesting programs that provide entry physicals, immunizations, and periodic health screenings.

FEMA looks very favorably upon departments incorporating a wellness and fitness activity with their application.

Firefighting Equipment Activity

Examples of Projects:

- Hoses, nozzles, SCBAs refill systems, Wildland equipment, radios, pagers

Priorities placed on:

- Basic equipment to meet codes and standards
- First time purchase over replacing old or substandard equipment
- Replace old and obsolete equipment over newer and functional equipment

Personal Protective Equipment Activity

Examples of projects:

- Clothing for structural and wildland suppression, haz mat equipment, fire-shelters, SCBAs, spare cylinders, personal alert safety systems

Priorities Placed on:

- Equip large percentage of active firefighters
- First time purchase over replacing old or substandard equipment
- Call volume and community size

Modifications to Fire Facilities Activity

Examples of projects:

Installation of sprinkler systems, vehicle exhaust extraction systems, smoke detectors and fire alarms

Priorities placed on:

Promoting fire and life safety
Fire stations over training facilities
High occupancy and frequent usage

This activity DOES NOT provide funding for the construction of fire stations

Fire Prevention Program

Examples of projects:

Public Education, public awareness, enforcing fire codes, purchase and installation of smoke alarms and fire suppression systems, arson prevention and detection, wildland fire risk mitigation actions.

Priorities placed on:

New Programs
Long term, self-sustaining programs
Targeting high-risk groups (firefighters, children under 14, seniors over 65)
Community wide benefits over limited projects
Projects over purchase of materials

Emergency Medical Services Program

Departments applying for this program, must have an EMS already established.

Training Activity, Wellness and Fitness Activity, Equipment Activity

Basic EMS certifications
Call volume and community size is a factor for funding
Compliance with standards

Vehicle Acquisition Program

Departments can request only one vehicle

A department may request a new, used, or refurbished vehicle

This is a HIGHLY competitive program; only 4% of applications are funded

Priorities, in order, are placed on

- Departments with few or no firefighting vehicles
- Replacing old/high mileage vehicles
- Primary response vehicle

For rural fire departments, emphasis is placed on:

- Pumper trucks
- Tankers
- Brush trucks
- Rescue-Pumper trucks
- Pumper-tanker trucks

Additional Program Information

Pre-award expenditures usually not allowed

Grant writers fees are eligible, but can not be contingent on receiving an award

Grant Requirements:

- Departments must maintain spending levels
- Pay 10% match for departments serving 50,000 or less
- Report to NFIRS

FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program 2003 Preparing a Competitive Grant

Steps to Follow to Develop a Competitive Grant

1. Conduct a community and fire department needs assessment
2. Compare your weakness to the priorities of the grant program
3. Decide what program to apply for
4. Complete the application – Answer questions about your request, write the narrative

Needs Assessment

Analyze the community your department serves:

Residential, Industrial, Commercial

Buildings of Importance: Schools, Industrial Parks, Large Wildland area

Are their major highways in your service area?

Conduct a Risk assessment

Evaluate the capabilities of your fire department

Identify your departments most pressing needs

Project Narrative

Use relevant information gathered in the needs assessment

Be Concise

Include an itemized list, if necessary

Components of a Competitive Narrative

Project Description

- Compare weaknesses identified in needs assessment to funding

- Have identifiable goals and objectives

- Have a beginning, middle, and end

Financial Need

- Why your department cannot fund this project without federal assistance

- Demonstrate attempts at other funding sources

- Describe current and past financial situation

Cost/Benefit Analysis

- Demonstrate that your solution is provided at the lowest possible funding

- Willingness to share with other communities; mutual aid agreements

- Collaboration with other organizations

Focus on the Grant Program Priorities

Demonstrate Financial Need

Develop a Proposal that provides good Cost/Benefit